

The Vancouver Women's Caucus started at Simon Fraser University with individual research papers on the position of women in society and discussions of the political implications that logically followed from these papers. The women in the S.D.U., the leftist student political organization found that as usual they were expected to make the coffee and address the envelopes but that their very real problems were ignored. They formed a women's caucus to discuss and take action on these problems. This group arranged for the distribution of the McGill handbook on birth control and formed a co-operative day care centre. Meanwhile similar groups were forming at U.B.C. And Vancouver City College - they ^{also have} ~~have also~~ arranged for the distribution of McGill handbooks and are still working on their day care problems. The climate for this type of intellectual discussion and action is not as good as it was at Simon Fraser.

By the spring of 1969 the Simon Fraser group decided that their other urgent problems such as equitable integration into the work force and abortion law repeal could not be dealt with effectively at Simon Fraser University and that discussions with non University women were essential. They decided to form a new group off campus. The first public meeting of the general Women's Caucus was held at Fisherman's Hall on May 21, 1969. There was a panel discussion on women in the work force, and plans were laid for talking to teachers

attending the U.B.C. Summer School, for a High School seminar, for a manpower group, for establishing a downtown office and a financial committee. The confusion in names was gradually resolved by calling the group at Simon Fraser Women's Liberation and our group downtown the Vancouver Women's Caucus.

The next meeting was June 18 at Fisherman's Hall where Marlene Dixon, a sociology professor from McGill University was the speaker. The finance committee decided to sell the "Labouring Under a Mis-Conception" posters, to hold a fund raising party and to try to obtain pledges. The third meeting was held at the Labour Temple where a panel discussed "Cats, Mice and Emmaline Pankhurst" which was all about the suffragette Movement, what it really was like, and what we could learn from it. We also discussed an organizational proposal and moved into our first office in the same building, Room 6, 307 W. Broadway. By this time speaking to teachers at U.B.C. was well underway and there were very heated discussions about the role of women and the socialization of children. On Sept 4 Mrs. Maycock from the Provincial Dept. of Health and Welfare and Melody Kilian from the Simon Fraser Co-op Nursery spoke to us on Day Care. About this time the Women's Artists Co-op was established at 137B Water Street as a place where women could explore their artistic potential free from male domination, and the first issue of our paper "The Pedestal" was published. Plans were also laid for a

conference on the Thanksgiving weekend at U.B.C. For three days over 200 women from all over western Canada and the western U.S. discussed our problems and courses of action. About this time we held our first public demonstration in front of the provincial government office building at 411 Dunsmuir St. protesting job discrimination by the provincial government. The second ^{demonstration} was held on October 24, United Nations Day, Using the U.N.'s "Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women" The DEMONSTRATION was held in front of the Engineer's Club and The Canada Manpower offices to protest their practices which effectively exclude women from occupations they are capable of handling. At the end of November a brief was presented to the Human Rights Commission which exposed the way in which the Human Rights Act did not extend Human Rights to Women. Meanwhile, outside, a tableau showed a 1959 woman chained to a stove, a 1969 woman carrying a picket sign and a 1979(?) woman carrying a gun. On Friday December 12 we presented a brief to the regional directors of Manpower outlining their discriminatory policies and the next day held a demonstration at the Post Office protesting ^{living} female Christmas help at \$1.25 and male Christmas help at \$1.50 an hour. We ran into some trouble with the postal Union because they were more concerned with their regular help who receive much higher pay.

On Wednesday evenings during October and November speakers talked about "Women as an Oppressed Group" In January

and February about "How Women Learn to be Inferior" and in March and April about "The Women's Liberation movement."

There was also a series held at Capilano College in March. In January one of our members Janiel Jolley went to Waterloo Lutheran University as a protest candidate for "Miss Canadian University". The candidate from York University Judy D'Arcy also joined her in protesting the competitive judging of female bodies for the purpose of creating profits for cosmetic companies, etc.

At the end of November 1969 we decided to set up an Abortion Counselling Service. (Our purpose was twofold, to cut down the number of deaths from illegal abortions, and to get the information we needed to do something about the new liberalized-do-nothing abortion law. What we discovered was so horrifying that we decided to work for ~~make~~ repeal of the Abortion Law, and changes in the way hospitals and doctors treated abortion patients our main priority for the first half of this year. During the first six months of this year we experienced an incredible degree of non-communication with federal and provincial governments and with the medical associations. The press and T.V. ignored this but picked up on our attempts to force communications, the guerilla theatre and parade through downtown followed by a public meeting at the Hotel Georgia, on Valentine's Day, the demonstration in the legislature in Victoria, the demonstration at the

College of Physicians and Surgeons at Burrard and tenth, and later at the Vancouver Lawn Tennis Club, the Cavalcade to Ottawa, the demonstration at Lost Lagoon on Mothers Day, the confrontation of Trudeau at the airport, the meeting he requested at the Bayshore Inn, and the demonstration in front of the Federal Building the following week.

We feel that we have had a considerable measure of success in changing the attitude of the medical profession- abortion has been removed from its list of unethical practices, the Hippocratic Oath has been changed, the Canadian Association of Psychiatrists and the Canadian medical Association have now both stated that abortion should be strictly a matter between a woman and her doctor and that abortion boards are unethical. We now feel that doctors are in a better position to work for repeal of the Abortion Laws but we are continuing to help women who seek abortions and to work for repeal of abortion laws in other contexts.

In a conference at the end of June we decided to make the problems of working women and the education of women our main priority. At present we have a Day Care Action group and we are considering ways of making unions aware of the problems their women members face, and also the possibility of forming a Women's Union.

We have also been investigating ways of organizing High School women, we held a conference of our high school

group earlier this month.

By the end of June it was obvious that we had outgrown our small office and we moved to our new headquarters at 511 Carrall St.

We have a great many requests for speakers and although [most of us feel quite inadequate in this role,[?]] we have found out that by going out in groups of two or three we can give each other support and are learning how to communicate our problems and alternatives we see for solutions to these problems.

From time to time disagreements on partisan politics arise within the Vancouver Women's Caucus. In the past one conflict was resolved by the formation of a separate group the Women's Liberation Front. We co-operate with this group in running the abortion counselling service. Another conflict is presently brewing and has not yet been resolved. We have no blueprint for the future only ideas to be discussed and acted upon. We welcome your ideas and hope you will join us in discussion and action.